

A Terrible Beauty: Poetry of 1916

Mairead Ashe FitzGerald

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'A terrible beauty is born'

WB Yeats's poignant words have come to immortalise the complex legacy of the Easter Rising, 1916. The poetry that emerged at this time of upheaval in Ireland gave voice to the thoughts of a generation. Yeats's poem, 'Easter 1916', sits alongside selected works of other major poets of the era. These include Patrick Pearse, Thomas MacDonagh and Joseph Plunkett, who were executed for their part in the Rising.

In the aftermath of the Rising an outpouring of poetry also expressed the shock and grief of literary figures such as Padraic Colum, Francis Ledwidge, Eva Gore-Booth, James Stephens, Dora Sigerson Shorter and Seán O'Casey. Rebels, soldiers, honorary Irishmen, sympathisers and exiles all held up a mirror, in verse, to the events, beliefs and desires bound up in 1916.



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